

Message Text

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12

ACTION INR-10

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R 27/1100Z AUG 73

FM USINT BAGHDAD

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 497

INFO AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

C O N F I D E N T I A L USINT BAGHDAD 0449

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINR, UR, IZ, KU

SUBJECT: SOVIET NAVY ROLE IN IRAQ-KUWAIT CONFLICT

REF: STATE 141619; (REQUIREMENT N-H 30-31140)

1. FOLLOWING IS IN RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS POSED REFTEL.:

2. TO BEST OUR KNOWLEDGE, SOVIET SHIP VISIT DURING ADMIRAL GORSHKOV'S VISIT WAS NOT ANNOUNCED PUBLICLY EITHER BEFORE OR AFTER VISIT. IT BECAME KNOWN IN DIPLOMATIC COMMUNITY ONLY AFTER ADMIRAL GORSHKOV'S ARRIVAL IN BAGHDAD.

3. USINT HAS NO EVIDENCE THAT SHIP VISIT WAS EITHER PLANNED WELL IN ADVANCE OR HASTILY ARRANGED.

4. GORSHKOV VISITED UMM QASR ON APRIL 8 AND 9. ACCORDING TO DIPLOMATIC SOURCES, HE SPENT NIGHT OF APRIL 8 ON CRUISER ANCHORED OFF UMM QASR. HIS ACTIVITIES PRIOR TO THIS WERE CONTAINED IN PRESS (AND FBIS) AND CONSISTED MAINLY OF TOURING OTHER PARTS OF COUNTRY.

5. IT WAS WIDELY BELIEVED IN BAGHDAD THAT DECISION TO SEND GORSHKOV TO REPRESENT USSR AT CELEBRATION OF FIRST ANNIVERSARY OF SOVIET-IRAQI TREATY WAS LAST MINUTE DECISION. THIS BELIEF WAS BASED ON (A) FACT THAT DURING MID-MARCH VISIT TO USSR
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SADDAM HUSSEIN HAD PUBLICLY INVITED TOP SOVIET POLITICAL LEADERSHIP AND THEY HAD MADE NO PUBLIC RESPONSE TO INVITATION; AND (B) ANNOUNCEMENT THAT GORSHKOV WOULD REPRESENT USSR WAS MADE ONLY SHORTLY BEFORE HIS ARRIVAL. THERE WAS STRONG BELIEF IN DIPLOMATIC COMMUNITY THAT IRAQIS WERE NOT PLEASED WITH ADMIRAL'S PRESENCE; E.G. NEITHER HIS HOST, MINISTER OF DEFENSE, NOR ANY OTHER RANKING IRAQI ATTENDED PARTY GIVEN IN HIS HONOR ON APRIL 9 BY SOVIET AMBASSADOR.

6. USINT WOULD LIKE TO RECEIVE COPY OF COMPLETED STUDY ON THIS SUBJECT AND ANY OTHER AVAILABLE STUDIES ON SOVIET NAVAL ACTIVITY IN GULF.
LOWRIE

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NNN

*** Current Handling Restrictions *** n/a

*** Current Classification *** CONFIDENTIAL

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